

the United States Small Business Administration [SBA] with their 1995 award of SBA Georgia Veteran Advocate of the Year.

This SBA award recognizes Dr. Mescon's 12 years of volunteer contributions as a mentor, teacher and supporter of the Georgia Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program Small Business Training initiative. In his position as Dean of the Georgia State University School of Business, Dr. Mescon provided the Georgia Veterans Leadership Program with facilities, administrative support and access to the Georgia State University Small Business Development Center. He also gave his own time as a lecturer at seminars and special functions. These contributions, along with Dr. Mescon's perseverance and leadership, helped the fledgling program gain the necessary attention, support and credibility to successfully launch its training initiative.

This Small Business Training initiative, begun in Georgia in 1983, has now been replicated across the nation. The Georgia Veterans Leadership Program has conducted seminars in 16 cities across the state of Georgia as well as in a dozen other states, reaching more than 10,000 veterans. The Georgia Veterans Leadership Program Small Business Training initiative has generated over 650 Small Business Administration-Veterans direct and guaranteed loans—for a total of nearly \$400 million in loans.

Helping Dr. Mescon in his important work over the past 12 years has been a dedicated team of volunteers including Mr. Ron Miller, Mr. Tommy Clack, Mr. Rodney Alsup, Mr. Max Carey, Mr. Tom Carter, Mr. Ted Chernak, Mr. Andrew Farris, Mr. Dixon Jones, Ms. Mary Lou Keener, Mr. John Howe, Mr. Jim Mathis, Mr. Michael Mantegna, Mr. John Medlin, Mr. Steve Raines, Mr. Chuck Reaves, Mr. Richard Schuman and Mr. Dan Wall and the Honorable Max Cleland.

Mr. President I applaud the dedicated work of these Georgians and the many others who have helped with this initiative over the years. I congratulate Dr. Mescon for his receipt of the 1995 SBA Georgia Veteran Advocate of the Year and hope he will continue in his tireless work in support of Georgia's veterans.●

#### FRANK AU COIN: SOUTH CAROLINA'S SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

● Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Frank AuCoin, South Carolina's small-business person of the year for 1995. He is owner and president of Sign It Quick, a computerized sign-making company based in Charleston.

Success has not simply knocked on the door for Frank. He has done it the old fashion way—by working hard. He is a self-made businessman whose sign-making chain now boasts nine franchises in South Carolina, Florida, and

Tennessee. The chain generated nearly \$4 million in sales just last year.

While Frank and his wife, Teresa, were operating a chain of bookstores in South Carolina and Georgia in the early 1970's, they realized the potential of the sign-making business when they could not get their signs made quickly enough. So they started making their own. By the late 1980's when the technology became available to generate computer-aided signs, Frank realized that he could start a business to create and mass-produce signs easily. In 1987, Frank and his wife invested their life savings into the concept of a computer-generated sign-making company and Sign It Quick was born.

Mr. President, I am delighted to commend Frank AuCoin's many successes as a small businessman. When he opened his first store he created the world's largest sign—one that was the length of five football fields. Since then, he has created signs for two Super Bowls, the Hard Rock Cafe chain, Euro-Disney, and Donald Trump.

Recently, the Post and Courier in my hometown of Charleston, reported that Frank was South Carolina's small-business person of the year. Now he is competing for the national honor from the U.S. Small Business Administration this month. I hope he wins.

I ask that the article be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Post and Courier, Mar. 18, 1995]

SIGN IT QUICK OWNER IS 1995 SBA HONOREE

Frank AuCoin, owner and president of Charleston-based Sign It Quick, has been named South Carolina's small-business person of the year for 1995.

The honor was announced Friday by its sponsor, the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"I'm really happy for the city of Charleston because this is the first time a company from here was ever in the running for this," AuCoin said.

Sign It Quick is a computerized sign-making company that operates nine franchises in South Carolina, Florida and Tennessee. The company, formed in 1987, is headquartered at 5101 Dorchester Road in Charleston Heights.

Sign It Quick has 60 employees. Company-wide sales were \$3.7 million last year. Coincidentally, South Carolina's small-business person of the year for 1994 was a Sign It Quick franchise owner, Julie Wetherell of Columbia.

The SBA will recognize its top small-business honorees next month in Washington, D.C. Companies represent each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands/Puerto Rico. The national small-business person of 1995 will be picked from the 53 business owners.

Also, AuCoin will be honored at a luncheon in Columbia May 4.

SBA bases its selections on factors such as innovations, staying power, employee growth and sales increases.●

#### DEFENSE EXPORT LOAN GUARANTEE AMENDMENT TO S. 570

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues as a cosponsor of this amendment to S. 570,

to create a defense export loan guarantee program. I believe the loan guarantee program will be critical to preserving our defense industrial base and is, therefore, an investment in America's long-term security.

In the post-cold war period, the United States has rightly reduced its procurement of expensive weapons systems. This has resulted in cost savings to the U.S. Treasury, but it has undermined the financial security of many of the manufacturers. We have encouraged conversion of some of the defense industry into production of other products. However, in the long run, we cannot afford to have all defense manufacturers convert to nondefense production. Even if the world's current trouble spots do not erupt into conflict, prompting another round of rearmament, the U.S. military must maintain an up-to-date inventory of the world's most capable equipment. To do that, we must preserve a minimum threshold of defense production, lest we face either astronomical startup costs or the disappearance of one or more critical defense producers altogether. Current U.S. defense procurement is not sufficient to keep some of these industries going; we must help them in their own efforts to export abroad.

I commend the administration for its recent review of arms export policy. That review concluded with the President's decision to preserve the current policy to discourage arms proliferation but to take into account as well U.S. domestic economic considerations in reaching a decision on applications for arms export licenses. I do not propose to change that policy in any respect.

While we do not want to make arms export licenses any more freely available than they are under current policy, I believe we should do more to level the playing field for U.S. manufacturers once an export license has been approved. U.S. defense industries face extremely tough competition for arms exports in the current international environment. Not only the United States, but also most of Western Europe have cut defense spending and military procurement budgets. In this shrinking market, U.S. defense manufacturers must compete against European and Canadian manufacturers who benefit from the extensive support—in some cases, including subsidies—of their governments.

Buyers have the advantage in the current, competitive international arms market. Having the best product, track record and support network is often not enough to win a competition. In many cases, one must also provide financing for the sale. At present, the only source of financing for U.S. weapons systems exports are commercial banks, whose loan rates often make the price for U.S. weapons exports uncompetitive. French, German, British, Italian and Canadian defense manufacturers can get government-subsidized or guaranteed loans for weapons exports. These governments are prepared to pay